

## ***Women of the Page House***

This is a brief overview about the women who lived and worked in the Jeremiah Page House as compiled by our Chairperson of Education, Sheila Cooke-Kayser, retired NPS Educator. For her full presentation and source list, please contact the Society office.

### **Sarah Andrews Page**

Sarah Andrews Page was born in Danvers on August 5, 1731. Her parents were Daniel Andrews (farmer) and Ginger Porter. Sarah, married Jeremiah (a pioneer of brickmaking in Danvers) in 1750. Jeremiah and Sarah purchased 19 acres on Elm and High street at Danvers Square in 1754 and built their Georgian style home. They eventually had nine children.

As is the case with many women who lived in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, few women, even those from middle class families, could read or write. We are not sure of Sarah's education, but we do know of one story about her finding a way to get around her husband's wishes which shows us her strength and character.

A friend of Anne Page (John and Mary's daughter), Lucy Larcom wrote "The Gambrel Roof" poem in 1874. She wanted to write a poem in celebration for the upcoming centennial in 1876. Sarah Page's tea party was perfect. "The Gambrel Roof" was first published in the Atlantic Monthly in 1874.

Sarah and Jeremiah, and many colonists, protested the British 1767 Townsend Act taxes especially the tax on tea. Many colonialists including some women signed petitions to not drink any more tea, including Jeremiah Page.

Jeremiah would have told his wife not to drink any more tea under his roof. For Sarah, obeying her husband was part of 18<sup>th</sup> century culture. BUT Sarah decided to still be able to drink her tea, while obeying her husband. Like many, she probably had tea purchased before the boycott, so she was not buying tea, but drinking what they had already. Supposedly, she waited until Jeremiah would be gone for a while and set up a tea party upon their Gambrel roof where they had a nice flat area. She invited two friends to drink tea "upon her roof, not under her roof" thus, obeying Jeremiah.

### **Deliverance or Dill**

Deliverance (nicknamed Dill) was a slave who was purchased by Jeremiah Page when she was a child in 1766. We do not know her exact age. In the receipt of purchase, Dill was bought along with her mother, Combo and older sister, Cate for 58lbs and 13.4 shillings. Newly arrived on a slave ship to Salem, John Tapley sold the slaves to Jeremiah Page. Sadly, Dill's mother and sister died within 2 years.

Like most children who were slaves, she would be raised with her master's children until she was old enough to be taught to do work. After her mother and sister died, she probably was old enough to help with the household duties as well as raise the children. In Lucy Larcom's poem, she mentions Dill helping Sarah to set up the table, chairs and tea for the party upon the roof. Dill probably did it all by herself.

In 1783 the Massachusetts legislature abolished slavery due to a female slave named Mum Bett. She sued her master, John Ashley and won. Due to her lawsuit, slavery was abolished in Massachusetts. She had many grandchildren and one great grandson, W.E.B. DuBois.

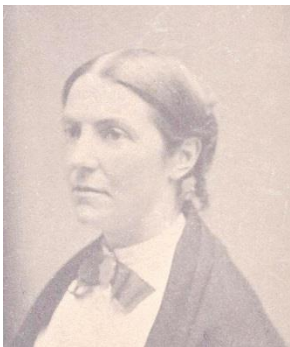
As for Dill, we do not know how much longer she might have stayed with the family, before she moved to Salem. She is identified as Deliverance Page when she marries Caesar Symonds of Salem.

According to Anne, she and Dill visited each other's families often. Anne recalled attending Dill's huge funeral around 1850. Dill was well loved and 90 years old when she died.

### **Mary and Anne Page- the last women to live in the Page House.**

Mary Fowler was born January 9, 1787 in New Mills, now Danversport, the daughter of Senator Samuel Fowler and Sarah Putnam Fowler. When she was 18 years old, she married John Page. She had a great love of nature and flowers and later built a conservatory on her house. She passed on her love of nature to Anne who would use this knowledge in her career.

Anne's life was the most fascinating of all the Page women. Anne was Mary and John's youngest child born in 1828. Anne loved school and she had to wait until the North Parish had its own secondary school in 1850 to earn her high school diploma at age 22. Sometime around 1850 she convinced her parents to allow her to open a school for very young children between the ages of 3 to 6. She told a friend many years later that her first school was "kindergartenish" and that she had read a great deal about Froebel and his kindergarten ideas. She knew German and French; therefore, she might have read his published works. Anne also believed in Plato's words ". . . power of children's love of play should be used in education."



We are fortunate to have an article written by one of her former students, Alice, talking about attending Anne's school in 1860s. We think Anne not only used the two front parlors and the conservatory room, but also a barn that existed on the property. She hired other teachers to assist her. Teachers took students on nature hikes nearby and gathered plants to study. Alice talked about the indoor conservatory and its fragrant blossoms.

Anne, along with Elizabeth Peabody and her sister Mary Mann founded the American Froebel Union. At age 50, she decided to attend a normal school to educate kindergarteners – name given to the kindergarten teachers. She attends Mary Garland's school in Boston. She graduates and then teaches at a school in the North End.



Anne decides to open her own normal school to teach teachers in 1885 in Danvers. By 1890 Elizabeth Peabody convinces the Boston Public Schools to establish kindergartens. A 1901 graduation pamphlet at Peabody Institute Library's Archival Center shows 10 graduates of Anne's school.

Anne trains teachers for the next thirty years. Some of her students include Edith and Olive Lesley. Edith founded Lesley College. Later a group of her students who taught at Wellesley College established the *Anne L. Page Memorial School*. Anne knew that her former students at Wellesley College were raising funds to build this school in the fall of 1912, but she died in May 1913, before the school officially opened. Today, this school still exists with Anne L. Page Memorial School over its door, but now known as the Wellesley College Child Study Center.

Anne was also a published author, and on the Danvers School Committee, trying to convince them to establish public kindergarten schools. The Danvers Women's Association met the challenge to operate and fund a school. Danvers did not add Kindergartens to the school system until the 1950s.



It is natural to think Anne might also have been a woman's suffragette. She was one of the founders of the Danvers Women's Association and supported the equal suffrage movement with a "calm faith." Many suffragette meetings were held in the Page House.

Anna Devereux, first Director of the Anne L. Page Memorial School, wrote after Anne's death that "She taught hundreds of little children, trained earnest young women by the scores from all over New England in the useful art of directing young minds in the kindergarten way."

A few months before her death, Anne attended the Essex County Teachers' Convention with a dear friend, James L. Hughes. During the meeting they discussed raising funds to erect a statue to a general born in Essex County. Mr. Hughes stood up and said that was a good idea, but "surely the lives of noble women deserve memorial monuments, too. A gracious woman came with me to this meeting. She was born in this county, and she did more for her native county, her state, her country and the world, than any man ever born in Essex County. Erect a monument to the general, but do not forget Anne Page."

For a complete reference list and the full story of the Women of the Page House, please contact the Society.

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